

SPICES, FLOWERS, LILIES AND MYRRH NO. 2479

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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*“His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers:
his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.”
Song of Solomon 5:13*

IN this chapter, the spouse describes in detail the person of her Beloved. She is not satisfied with saying, “He is altogether lovely,” but she delights to talk of the charms of each part of His sacred person, and to picture the beauties of His divine form and features, so that thereby she may, perhaps, win some other heart first to admire and then to love Him.

Dear friends, there are some things about which you will be wise not to go into details. You had better speak in general terms of half the things on earth, for if you once describe them in detail, you will have to confess that they are marred by a thousand imperfections. You may be content to give merely a surface glance at them, for if you dive beneath the surface, you will soon discover much that will alter your opinion of the thing that at first sight looked so lovely.

But it is not so with Jesus, our Well-beloved. You may talk of Him as long as ever you please, and praise Him as much as ever you can, yet you will never discover that you have exaggerated His excellences. You may go into detail about Him, and dwell with much minuteness upon everything relating to His character, His offices, His Words, His deeds, and you shall be made to wonder at the perfection of each one of them.

You may apply the microscope to Christ, you may examine His little things, if indeed, anything can be little that refers to Him, you may look into the deep things of Christ, the hidden things of Christ, His secrets, and the more closely you look, the more you shall be amazed, and astonished, and filled with delight.

It is of Christ, the Heavenly Bridegroom, that we perceive the spouse to be speaking, and mentioning in detail at least ten particulars, dwelling with delight upon the beauties of His head and His locks, His eyes and His cheeks, His lips and His hands, and every part of Him, and beloved friends, I think it shows true love to Christ when we want to speak at length upon everything that concerns Him.

The general hearer says, “Oh, yes, yes! of course, Christ is the Son of God, and He is also perfect man, I believe that,” but he does not want you to go into minute particulars concerning your Lord. It is not so with those who truly love the Savior, they wish to know all that can be known about Him.

True love likes to become familiar with the object of its affection, its heart is set upon that object, it studies it, and can never know it too well or too closely. True love to Christ thinks of Him from morning till night, it is glad to be released from other thoughts that it may follow only its one darling pursuit. True love to Christ seeks to get to Him, to live with Him, to live upon Him, and thus to know Him so intimately that things which were unobserved and passed over at the first, stand out in clear light to the increased joy and delight of the contemplative mind.

I wish, dear friends, that we had many more of those people who study Christ from head to foot, that they may learn all that can be learned about Him, those who would be able, with the spouse, to talk of His charms and beauties in detail, and to describe them as she does with rapturous delight.

You know how very unacquainted many people are with the Song of Solomon, they shut up this book of canticles in despair, and say that they cannot understand its meaning. You will find that it is just

the same with every truly spiritual thing. If you put into the hands of any one of them a deeply spiritual book, he will say, “I cannot comprehend what the writer means, the man seems to be in a rapture, and I cannot make out what he is aiming at by such writing.”

Just so, unspiritual people are all at sea in spiritual things, and even some of God’s children, who do know Christ so as to be saved by Him, seem to be altogether out of their depth when you begin to speak of the things which you have made touching the King, or dilate upon those special truths which only experience and fellowship with Christ can reveal to the soul.

In speaking upon our text, I am sure that I shall not say too much in praise of my Lord and Master, my fear is that I shall not say a thousandth part as much as He deserves—and yet, perhaps, it shall seem but trivial talk to some who as yet do not know that one hair of His head is worth more than the whole world, and that one drop of His precious blood has an eternal efficacy about it. On the other hand, I know that I shall not speak too enthusiastically for those whose hearts are warm with love to Christ. May the Lord, in great mercy, make us all to have such hearts, and He shall have all the praise!

There are two things I shall speak of as I may be helped by the Holy Spirit. First, *Christ looked upon is very lovely*, “His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers.” Secondly, *Christ listened to is very precious*, “His lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.” There is an important distinction between the two heads of my discourse that I want you to notice before I proceed further, for there is a considerable difference between Christ looked upon and Christ listened to.

There are some who listen to Christ’s Gospel, and they do well, but those who also look with eyes of love upon His sacred person. Those who contemplate not only what He says, but what He is, those who delight to know not only what He taught but what He is who taught it, these are they who have penetrated yet further into the mysteries of Christ.

I. With these we begin as we consider our first point—CHRIST LOOKED UPON IS VERY LOVELY.

Note that these saints first see their Lord’s loveliness and then they say concerning Him, “His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers.” But why do they mention His cheeks?

I suppose, first, because *every part of Christ is inexpressibly delightful*. Take any portion of His countenance that you may, and it has surpassing beauty about it. The spouse had already spoken upon her Beloved’s head, and locks, and eyes, and now she mentions His cheeks. Any sight of Christ is delightful, a single passing glimpse of Him is a foretaste of heaven, the beginning of paradise.

Though you see but little of Christ, yet if it is Christ whom you really see, that sight will save you. Though you see Christ, as it were, with but one eye, and though that eye be dim, and though that dim eye be filled with tears, yet if you do but see Him at all, that sight will save you, and just in proportion as you are able to see Him, your delight will increase. But a sight of Him in any capacity, and under any form, has great richness of sweetness in it.

Think for a moment what is meant by a sight of “His cheeks.” Though you may not yet see the majesty of His brow as King of kings and Lord of lords—though you may not perceive the brightness of the lightning flashes of His eyes, which are as a flame of fire—though you may scarcely be able to imagine at present what will be the glory of His second advent—yet if you can but see the cheeks that He gave to the smiters, if you do but know something of Him as the suffering Savior, you shall find that there is inexpressible delight in Him, and with the spouse you will say, “His cheeks are as a bed of spices.” To a believing soul then, there is great delight in every part of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But I think, the saints see *great loveliness in those parts of Christ which have been most despised*. Just now, I mentioned the cheek as one of those parts of Christ’s blessed body that were exposed to special shame, as Isaiah foretold, using by inspiration the very words of the Messiah in His agony, “I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.”

Oh! if we could but see Him now, if we could but gaze upon His face as it is in glory, what a subject of meditation it would be to think that ever the spittle of cruel mockers did run a-down those blessed

cheeks—that infinite loveliness was insulted with inconceivable contempt—the holy face of the Incarnate Son of God distained with the accursed spittle of brutal men [See sermon #2473, *An Awful Contrast*].

O my soul, how low your Lord has stooped! Can you really believe it possible that it should have been so? Yea, you know that it was so, yet is it not sad to think that His dear face, which is as the sun shining in his strength, which is indeed the very heaven of heavens, the light of the temple of God above, is it not sad to think that His face should have been spit upon for your sake, and because of your sin and your iniquity? Alas! that each of us had a part in that shameful deed.

*“My Jesus! who with spittle vile
Profaned Thy sacred brow?
Or whose unpitying scourge has made
Thy precious blood to flow?”*

*“’Tis I have thus ungrateful been,
Yet, Jesus, pity take!
Oh, spare and pardon me, my Lord,
For Thy sweet mercy’s sake!”*

“It was I, with my vain and idle talk, with my false and proud speech, that did spit into that dear face.” How sad that He should ever have been made to suffer so! O glorious love, that He should be willing even to stoop to this terrible depth of ignominy that He might lift us up to dwell with Him on high! So, I say again, every part of Christ is lovely, but that which has been most despised and most subjected to suffering and shame for us is the peculiar subject of our delightful contemplation.

And next, my brethren, *those parts of Christ in which we do not immediately see any special office or use* are nevertheless peculiarly lovely to the saints. I can gaze by faith on the brow of Him who plans for me, and admire His infinite wisdom. I can think of the eye of Him who looks in love upon me, and bless Him for His care. I can praise the lips that speak for me in heaven, and that speak to me upon earth, and I can bless the matchless eloquence that never ceases to plead for me and with me, but as for the cheeks of Christ, what do they do for me? What peculiar function have they to perform?

I fear that we are all too apt to ask concerning Christ, “How is this to work for our advantage, and how is that to turn out for our profit?” Has it come to this—that we are never to love Christ except when we see that we are profited by Him? If there be an abstruse doctrine, as we think it, that does not appear to have a practical outlook, are we therefore never to speak of it? If we cannot see that we derive comfort, or profit, or sanctification, from some teaching which may be high, mysterious, sublime, so that we do not see whereunto it tends, yet, beloved, are we to refuse to think of it?

Until the question, “*Cui bono?*” shall have been answered, will we seal up that sacred page, and never read it? Do you care only for the lips that speak to you? Have you no love for the cheeks that are silent? Do you care for nothing but for the eyes that are watching over you? If there come to you nothing from those cheeks of your Lord, yet shall they not be to you, “as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers”?

The fact is, we are not to judge concerning Christ in any such fashion as this, on the contrary, if there is any duty which Christ has commanded, but which, instead of seeming to be easy and profitable to us, is hard and requires that we should give so much that Judas will cry out, “To what purpose is this waste?” let us never mind him, but break our alabaster boxes, and pour out the sweet perfume upon our dear Master.

Let the cheeks that seem to have no special office to fulfill, let that part of Christ or of Christianity that seems to serve no end that we can see, be nevertheless precious to us. These are *His* cheeks, therefore are they precious to me, this duty is a command from Him, therefore I must perform it, and this doctrine, of which I do not see the practical end, is, nevertheless, a doctrine of His teaching, therefore I accept it with delight.

But further, beloved children of God, the followers of Christ have an intense admiration, an almost infinite love for *that part of Christ by which they are able to commune with Him*, and perhaps that is one reason why His cheeks are here specially mentioned. The cheek is the place of fellowship where we exchange tokens of love. What a blessing it is that Christ should have had a cheek for the lips of love to approach and to kiss! What a privilege it is that ever it should be possible for a loving heart to express its affection to Christ!

If He had accepted us, and then put us right away from Him, and said, "There, you may love me, but you must never tell me of it," if we were conscious that when we did talk of our love to Christ, He never knew it, for He was far away, and high above us, and did not care for such poor love as ours, in such a case He would not be half such a Christ as He now is to us.

If He had taken Himself away to the ivory palaces, and had shut the door, and if, when we tried to gaze up at Him there, He only looked down upon us with His countenance "as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars," but never stooped to where we were, that He might commune with us, and that we might tell out to Him the story of our love, He would not be half as sweet to us as He is now.

Many of you know what it is to pray right into His very ear in the time of your sorrow, and you also know what it is to speak right into His ear in the hour of your joy, and sometimes, when you have been alone with Him (now I am talking of the deep things of Christ, of the pearls which are not to be cast before swine), you know that He has heard what you have said to Him. You have been as certainly assured that He has been listening to your declaration as if, like Peter, you had heard Him ask, "Lovest thou me?" and you had answered, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee," and you have been delighted with the thought that He did know that you loved Him, and that you might tell Him that it was so.

You rejoiced also that you could go forth into the world, and do something that He would see you do, something that you did not do for the sake of the church, much less for your own sake, but which you did all for Him, just as you would give Him the kisses of love upon His own cheeks, which are, "as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers." Those of you who have ever been in communion with Christ know what I mean, and you know that anything by which you come into close contact with Christ is very, very delightful to you.

How greatly we rejoice to think of Christ's humanity, because we feel that it brings Him very near to us! He is our Brother, He feels what we feel, and through His humanity this wondrous Man is next of kin to us. He who is truly God, is also our near Kinsman, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. How the blessed doctrine of the union of the saints with Christ delights us, as we remember that "we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones"! How the wondrous truth of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost charms us, because the same Spirit that rested upon Him rests also upon us, and the holy oil that was first poured upon Him who is the Head descends even to us who are as the hem of the garment that reaches even to the ground!

It is the same Spirit that is upon Him that is upon us, and so again we are one with Him. Does not this truth also make prayer very sweet as the means of getting to Christ, and does it not make praise very sweet as another means of communicating with Christ? And oh! though some put the sacred table of the Lord out of its proper place, yet is the communion of the body of Christ a dear and blessed ordinance.

Often do we know Him in the breaking of bread when we have not recognized Him, even though He has talked with us by the way. So you see, the saints delight in those truths concerning Christ which enable them to have fellowship with Him, and thus they realize what the spouse meant when she said, "His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers."

I have thus tried to show you that the saints see great beauty in Christ when they look upon Him, but now I have to remind you that saints also labor to tell others of the loveliness of Christ when they look upon Him. In this blessed service, however, they must in part labor in vain, for as we have often sung—

"Living tongues are dumb at best,

We must die to speak of Christ."

I suppose that even he who has seen Christ in heaven could not fully tell us of His beauties. Paul has not told us much of what He heard in paradise, though he told all he could tell after he had been caught up to the third heaven. He "heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful (or possible) for a man to utter." Oh, how one longs for but a moment's sight of Christ in glory! One might be content to have only a dry crust, and to lie in an underground dungeon for the rest of one's life, if one might but gaze on His blessed face for once, and hear Him say, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love."

Perhaps you think you would have a deal to tell if that were your blessed experience, but beloved, you might not have anything to tell, you would only feel less able to speak than you ever were before. You would be so dazzled, so astonished, so amazed at the glory of Christ, that perhaps you might never be able to speak at all.

The spouse, however, in our text tries to speak of the loveliness of Christ by comparisons. She cannot do it with one emblem, she must have two even concerning His cheeks, they are "as a bed of spices," "as sweet flowers."

Notice in the metaphors used by the spouse, that there is *a blending of sweetness and beauty*, "as a bed of spices"—there is sweetness, and then, "as sweet flowers"—there is beauty. There is sweetness to the nostrils and beauty to the eye, spice for its fragrance and flowers for their loveliness. In Christ there is something for every spiritual sense, and for every spiritual sense there is a complete satisfaction and delight in Him.

Look at Him, and He is to your sight as sweet flowers. Get a spiritual taste of Him, and then He is as honey and the honeycomb. Take, as it were, a spiritual smell of Him, and you shall find that He is "as a bed of spices." Touch Him, or hear Him, and it shall be just the same, you shall find the daintiest, the highest, the most harmonious feelings your spirit ever knew when you do but approach Him with any spiritual sense in full exercise.

Our blessed Master may be viewed from every side, and yet He is perfect from every aspect. We have seen Him far above us. There are few things that look well when set up aloft, and gazed at from below, but He does. We shall one day see Him side by side, and I warrant you that we shall count Him lovely then even as we reckon Him lovely now. Angels have looked down upon Him from above, gazing on Him when He was here on earth, and He was infinitely lovely to their vision.

Seen by daylight or by moonlight, seen in the crowd or seen in solitude, seen in our days of sorrow or seen in our times of joy, our Lord Jesus possesses all kinds of loveliness compacted into one perfect loveliness, all perfections blended to make one perfection, every sweet concocted and distilled to make one perfect sweetness. Well, therefore, may His spouse pile up the metaphors, and blend sweet spices with fragrant flowers in trying to describe His charms.

Notice that when the spouse is speaking of the cheeks of her beloved, she brings in the idea of *abundance*—spices, ay, "a bed of spices," flowers—not one or two, but according to the Hebrew, "towers of perfume," which I understand to mean those raised beds which we delight to have in our gardens, where there are many flowers set in order, forming charming banks of beauty. No doubt Solomon had some of those in his garden, for "there is nothing new under the sun," and those raised beds of dainty flowers are fit emblems of the beauteous cheek of Christ, with its delicate tints of white and red. So in Christ there is infinite abundance.

There is also in Christ infinite *variety*, there is in Him all you can want of any one thing, and there is more than all you can want of everything. There is all that your soul could take in of any one thing, and more than your soul could take in if it were multiplied a million times, and could take in a million precious things at once. There is all you ever have wanted, and all you ever will want. Did I say, "want"? There is in Christ all you can desire, for that is one of His names, "He is all desires."

When you get to heaven, and have a larger heart than you at present possess, when your soul shall be spacious as the sea, if it could be vast as the universe itself, still He would be able to fill it, and still to be

Himself overflowing with blessing. There is in Him abundance, and there is variety. Oh, what a Christ He is! “As a bed of spices, and as sweet flowers.”

The spouse’s metaphors seem to me also to suggest *use and delight*. She speaks of spices, for which there is practical use in surgery and in medicine, for preservation and for perfume, and she also mentions sweet flowers, for which there may not be any particular use, but which are charming for ornament, and for the delectation of taste. So, dear friends, in Christ Jesus there is all that we want, but there is a great deal more. There is something beside and beyond our actual necessities, there are many spiritual luxuries.

I like, at the Lord’s table, to think to myself, “Here is bread, that is the staff of life, but what is that in the cup? Wine! Ah! Why not water? Here is more than I need, for I can live without wine,” but the Lord says that I shall not do so. He will not only give His people the best things, but the best of the best, when our Lord keeps house, He does not allow us just so many ounces of bread, and so many ounces of meat, as they do in the workhouse, but He says, “Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” The Bridegroom cries, “Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved,” and He does not merely bring out wine, but you know how it is described, “wines on the lees well-refined.”

Christianity is not the bond slave’s starvation allowance that some people make it out to be—duty, and doing, and serving, to win Christ, and to keep up your position, and I know not what besides. It is heirship with Christ, the possession in Him of everything, and the privilege of living up to our royal income—oh that we could attain to that high style of living! “All things are yours,” then claim them as your own.

God has given you His dear Son, and He has given you Himself, for He has said, “I will be their God.” Then live with the joy that a man ought to have who has JEHOVAH to be his God, and Jesus Christ to be his Savior. The Lord has given us everything, then let us live at the rate of joy that a man ought to have who possesses everything. God bring us to that happy state!

“His cheeks”—those features of the Beloved which do not at first seem likely to yield us anything—“are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers,” inexpressibly precious, yielding to us both what we need and what shall delight and overflow our souls. You see, beloved, what saints think of Christ, let each one of us ask himself and herself, “Do I think thus of Him? Do I thus admire Him? Is He everything to me?” These are sure marks of a true Christian, that he loves his Master, and he does praise Him.

There is many a poor child of God who is half afraid that he is not in the number of God’s people, but he says, “I love Jesus. Oh! I would do anything to glorify Him.” My dear friend, do not you ever get the idea that you love Him without His loving you, you may be quite sure that the reason why you love Him is because He first loved you, and if you love Him very much, you may rest assured that He loves you a great deal more. If you have but a spark of love to Him in your heart, He has a furnace of love to you in His heart. If your love to Him is but as a single grain, His love to you is abundant as the richest harvest. His love to you is as much above your love to Him as the heavens are higher than the earth.

Oh, that we did but think more highly of Christ! Perhaps it may help us to do so if we consider how worthy He is of that love, and how wondrously His thoughts of us exceed our thoughts of Him. I sometimes feel very sad when I think about some who profess to be the Lord’s people. Ah, me! there are many who, I hope, may prove to be His people, but they do not reflect much credit on Him. Some of God’s children are a very queer lot, if we had such sons and daughters as God has, some of us would never be able to bear with them at all, we should be impatient with them, and turn them out of doors, to get on as best they could by themselves.

When you get sick, and sad, and weary of God’s people, turn your thoughts to God Himself, and if ever you see any spots in the church, Christ’s bride, look at her glorious Husband, and you will only love Him the more as you think of His wondrous condescension in having loved such a poor thing as His church is even at her best.

Think how bright He is, how glorious, how surpassing are His charms that they can be seen even through the defects and imperfections of His redeemed ones. We may well marvel that ever such love as

His could have been lavished upon such unworthy beings as His people are. Do not get depressed and distressed, dear friends, because of your own imperfections, or the imperfections of others, or if you do, quickly rise again to fight against sin under the blessed conviction that there are no imperfections in Him, that He is altogether lovely, altogether sweet, and that the day must come when we, who are one with Him even now, shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Complete sanctification will be the lot of every redeemed soul. If we have known the Lord, and have already had something of His likeness, we shall go on to know Him till we are perfect in that likeness. Let that blessed consummation be the subject of our constant prayer and our confident expectation.

II. Now secondly, and but briefly, let us turn to the other part of our text, “His lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.” These words teach us that CHRIST LISTENED TO IS VERY PRECIOUS.

When He is silent, and we only look at Him, He is lovely to our eyes, but when He speaks, we can see “his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.”

Notice first, that it is well, whenever we hear the voice of Jesus Christ, *to try to see the blessed Person who is speaking*. The Gospel is very precious to those of us who know its power, but beyond all question, Christ Himself is even more precious than His Gospel. It is delightful to read any promise of the Scriptures, but it is more delightful to come into communion with the faithful Promiser.

The time when I can most enjoy a promise from the Word of God is when it seems to me as if it must have been written only yesterday on purpose to meet my case, or as if I could see the eternal pen writing every one of the strokes, and making them all for me. Whenever you hear one of the Lord’s promises, think of the divine lips that spoke it, and you will love the promise all the better because you have thought of the lips that uttered it.

The spouse does not say in our text, “His words are sweet,” but she speaks of, “his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.” Why should we not believe more in a personal Christ, and why should we not always see the connection between the mercy and the hand that gives it, and between the promise and the lips that speak it?

Some of you may remember William Huntington’s story that I have sometimes quoted to you about an old farmer, who, when one of his daughters was married, gave her a thousand pounds as a wedding present. There was another daughter, and her father did not give her a thousand pounds when she was married, but he gave her something as a wedding present, and then he kept on pretty nearly every day in the week, sending her what he called “the hand-basket portion, with father’s love,” and so in the long run she received a great deal more than her sister did.

It was not given all of a lump, and then done with, but it kept on coming, now a sack of flour, and then this, and that, and the other, always “with father’s love.” And so she had far more than the thousand pounds, and she also had far more of his love.

I do like, when I get a mercy, to have it come to me with my Heavenly Father’s love, just my daily portion as I need it, not given all in a lump, so that I might go away with it into a far country, as we are sure to do if we have all our mercy at once, but given day by day, as the manna fell, with our Heavenly Father’s love every time, a fresh token of infinite grace and infinite love. So, you see, the mercy leads you to think of the hand that gives it, and of the Father who sends it, as in the text it is not the words of the Beloved, but His lips which the spouse says are “like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.”

Notice the comparison in the text—lilies, not white lilies, of course, but red lilies, crimson lilies, lilies of such a color as are frequently to be seen, which would be a suitable emblem of the Beloved’s lips. Christ’s lips are peculiarly delightful to us, for *it is with them that He speaks to us, and intercedes with the Father for us*.

When He pleads as the Intercessor on behalf of a poor soul like me, His lips are indeed in God’s sight like lovely lilies. The Father looks at His dear Son’s lips, and He is charmed with them, and blesses us because of Christ’s intercession. And whenever Christ turns round, and speaks to us, shall we not

listen at once, with eyes and ears wide open, as we say, “I like to watch His lips as He is speaking, for His lips are to me as lilies”?

I suppose this comparison means that Christ’s lips are very pure, as the lily is the purest of flowers, and that they are very gentle, for we always associate the lily with everything that is tender, and soft, and kind. There is not a thorn about it as there is with the rose, we speak not of it as Herbert did of the rose—

*“Whose hue, angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye.”*

It is not so, the lily is all tenderness, and is without a thorn, though often it may be found growing among thorns. The lily also is inconceivably beautiful, and so is Christ in speaking to His people. “Never man spake like this Man.” The very words of Christ are the loftiest poetry and the sweetest music. Though they sometimes make us weep, great joy lies deeply hidden beneath the grief He causes to our spirits. “His lips are like lilies.”

But dear friends, the spouse’s comparison fails, for she said, “His lips, like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.” This lilies do not do, but Christ does. He is more than a lily, or He is a lily of such a sort as never bloomed on earth except once. He was the only lily that ever dropped sweet smelling myrrh. The spouse says that His lips do that, what means this? Does it not mean that His Word is often full of a very sweet, mysterious, blessed influence?

You have come here often, and it is not because I have spoken that there has been a blessing to your souls, but when I have set forth Christ to you—and I have no other theme but Christ—there have often come to you mysterious droppings, you have had singular feelings in your spirit, caused by the secret exudations of the Word, the outflowings from the Word, and inflowings into your spirit, causing you to say, “What a change has come over me! I went into God’s house very heavy, but I came away quite relieved. I went in there perplexed and worried, but I came away knowing clearly what I ought to do. I went in there cold and chilly, and feeling myself at a distance from God, and I came out ready to dance with the sense of His realized presence.” Ah! that change has been caused by some of the sweet smelling myrrh that has dropped from the lips of Christ.

There are many people who meet with us on the Sabbath, who do not care to come out to the week night services. I take the week night attendance as somewhat of a test of piety, any hypocrite will come out on a Sunday, but it is not every hypocrite who will come out on a Thursday night, though some do I dare say, but still, the most of them are for a Sunday religion only, but a weekday religion they do not want.

That is to say, they will feed on the Word after a fashion, and worship God after a fashion, when most other people do, but give me that religion that loves to creep out on a week night, and is willing to take a back seat if it may but get a bit of spiritual food. Give me that man who says, “My soul must be fed. I have been tearing about all this week, almost worn out with fatigue, and perplexed with a great many cares, it is a delightful thing to be able to get into the house of prayer, to hear about Christ, and to feed on Him.”

Oh, you who eat your morsels in secret behind the door, I believe more in you than in those who sit openly at the table, but who never have a secret feast at all!

“Oh, but!” says one, “I do not hear the Word to profit.” No, of course you do not. You see, you are looking to the lips of a man, but if you look to the lips of the Master, you will find that “his lips are as lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.”

You may have heard the story of the lady who was present when Mr. Ebenezer Erskine preached at a Scotch communion service, she thought she had never heard such a man in all her life, he preached Christ so sweetly that she was charmed. She inquired where he was to preach the next Sabbath, and she left her own place of worship to go to hear Mr. Erskine again, but it was a dreadfully dry discourse, she said, and she was foolish enough to go into the vestry and say to the preacher, “My dear sir, I have been

bitterly disappointed in hearing you this morning. I heard you last Sabbath, and you so extolled Christ that I enjoyed the service above measure, and so I thought I would come again to hear you, but now I have got nothing.” “No, madam,” replied the good man, “last Sabbath you went to worship God, and to feed on Christ, so you received the blessing you sought, today you came to hear Mr. Erskine, and you have heard me, but you have missed the blessing.”

Oh, dear friends, beware of going to places of worship merely to hear men! Of course you must hear a man speaking, but go with this view, that those lips which are as lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh, should be the lips to which you really are listening, and be praying all the time, “Lord, speak to me through the minister, speak to me through the hymn, speak to me through the prayer, speak to me through any part of the service—ay, speak through the speaker’s not speaking if Thou wilt—only do Thou speak to me, let those dear lips of Yours drop sweet smelling myrrh into my soul!” Pray thus, and you shall not be disappointed, you can be sure of that.

This blessing is what you and I must seek after day by day, for we need this myrrh for the healing of the wounds that sin has made, we need this myrrh in our spiritual worship that we may offer it up to God, we need this myrrh to perfume us, and make our lives fragrant in the midst of our daily cares, we need this myrrh to kill the contagion that abounds in this wicked world, and we shall get it through the Word, when it comes fresh from the lips of Christ. O God, bring us all into this blessed state!

I close by saying, that if there are any here present who do not prize the Word of God, who have no care to listen to the lips of Christ, I pray God that they may speedily be converted, for if they are not, they shall hear Him speak when His lips shall not be as lilies, but as a flaming fire, and His Word that shall be spoken then shall burn as an oven, and His enemies shall be consumed thereby.

God give grace to such as have not believed in Jesus to look to Him and listen to Him now! “Incline your ear,” saith He, “and come to me: hear, and your soul shall live.” Yea, He saith, “Look to me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” May God give His blessing to these words, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—785, 970, 426

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